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End Downriver Crossing study NOW, says Patterson

LANSING – On the heels of a packed public meeting attended by more than 800 citizens, Senator Bruce Patterson, R-Canton, introduced Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 27 and Senate Resolution 57 opposing further study or construction of a Downriver crossing to Canada.

Studies have clearly demonstrated that Downriver sites are not practical options. Each of the sites has ‘fatal flaws’ and ‘overriding considerations’ that make them ‘not feasible.’ Hence, further study of these sites is fiscally irresponsible, and creates needless disruption of the area.

Both resolutions were referred to the Technology and Energy Committee, chaired by Patterson, who vowed to hold the committee hearing in the Downriver area in the near future.

“With passage of these Resolutions I hope to put an end to the waste of taxpayer money and general foolishness being perpetrated by this MDOT study,” Patterson said. “They have the discretion to stop this now, but aren’t using it. We’re not talking about ‘not in my back yard-ism’, but gross government waste and potential disaster to a delicate ecosystem, setting back years of clean-up work.”

Downriver area residents expressed outrage and voiced strenuous objections at several public meetings, most recently on August 25, when Patterson invited the Senate Transportation Committee to a jammed local hearing on Grosse Ile. Permanent damage to the Downriver environment was a primary concern. Real estate markets there have frozen with uncertainty and local school funding will shrink dramatically if property values fall.

Environmental havoc, detailed in the resolutions, is almost certain if a crossing’s construction disturbs the Black Lagoon, just downstream from the McLouth Steel property. Sediments in the area are well documented. According to the resolutions, the area contains high levels of mercury, PCBs, cadmium, lead and other substances known to be hazardous to humans, wildlife, and aquatic species. Lead contamination levels in this vicinity also exceed human contact standards. Construction of an international bridge will have “injurious consequences on the small streams, ponds and other sensitive ecosystems of the Downriver watershed.”

The Resolutions are addressed to President Bush, Governor Granholm, Michigan’s Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, leaders of Congress and the Michigan delegation in Congress.

For a copy of Resolution 27, background information on the proposed project and statements from local residents, visit <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/patterson/>.

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